

Bosnia. They show, once again, that firmness pays off. We all are proud of the American and allied air crews who conducted the NATO operation with such bravery and skill.

All parties should now turn from the battlefield to the bargaining table and complete a

political settlement. Ambassador Holbrooke and his team have made additional progress since the Geneva meeting 12 days ago. The time has come to end the fighting for good and begin the task of reconciliation and reconstruction in the Balkans.

Message on the Observance of Rosh Hashana *September 20, 1995*

Warm greetings to all who are celebrating Rosh Hashana, marking a new year of both promise and renewal.

On this solemn occasion each year, the powerful call of the shofar is sounded, summoning Jews around the world to a spiritual reawakening. The message of Rosh Hashana—remembrance and redemption for the new year—serves as a timeless lesson for all of us as we seek

a closer relationship with God and work to find deeper meaning in our lives.

This sacred holiday is also a time for self-examination and an opportunity to celebrate God's ongoing creation. Let all who are rejoicing in this season of hope also strengthen their resolve to work for a better, brighter future.

Best wishes for a joyous Rosh Hashana and for a new year of peace.

BILL CLINTON

Remarks at a Clinton/Gore '96 Dinner in Denver, Colorado *September 20, 1995*

Thank you very much, Mr. Vice President; you certainly convinced me. [*Laughter*] Folks, I hope I live long enough to see Al Gore look at this seal when he won't have to close his eye to read, "President of the United States of America." [*Applause*] Thank you. You have no idea how good a speech that was. Sunny must have waked him up down there at dinner or something because the Vice President and I were in Philadelphia 2 nights ago; I flew to Miami; he flew back to Washington. But the next night when we were speaking in Miami, he was in Miami. Now here we are in Denver. I flew to Denver last night; he flew back to Washington—[*laughter*—]and then got up this morning and flew to New Mexico and then came here. He is a bionic person. He actually has a little computer chip at the base of his spine that was about to play out. [*Laughter*] And I don't know how he got through this tonight, but I'm grateful to him for doing it. [*Laughter*]

Let me say that I am honored to be here with Wellington Webb and with Wilma. I admire his leadership, and I admire their partnership. That has a pretty high place in our family's deliberation; I like that. I've enjoyed working with Mayor Webb on many things, and we've got a lot of things to work on in the future for the benefit of the people of Denver, and I look forward to that.

I always love the time that I have to spend with Roy Romer, who, as all of you know, is a longtime friend of mine. He and Bea and Hillary and I have known each other a long time because we both were fortunate enough to serve as Governors for a long time. And I said today down in Pueblo, I want to say again—by the time I left the governorship in 1992 to become President it was the consensus of the Governors of the United States in both parties that Roy Romer was the best and most innovative Governor in the entire country.

I also want to thank all of you who sold the tickets and who raised the money and those

of you who gave it and came here. Tonight I want to talk to you a little bit about—the Vice President has talked about what we have done—I want to talk about what we’re going to do and what matters to our country. And I want to ask you when you leave here not to think that your job is done.

I am profoundly grateful for the support, for the work that Terry McAuliffe and Laura Hartigan and our people have done and all the people here in Colorado and the folks who have come from Arizona and other places all across America. I thank you for that. But I would remind you that this is just a beginning. Every one of you was given at your seats a little article about our administration, written by a person I’ve never even met, but it’s pretty favorable. [Laughter] And you can read the other stuff every day—[laughter]—and a summary of the things that the Vice President just talked about. I hope you’ll take it home with you. I hope you’ll give it to your friends. I hope you’ll use it. I hope you’ll begin to speak about why this election is important, because I believe that what we have done and what it is we still have to do as a people, make this coming election one of the most important elections of this century.

I also want to say one very serious word about the Vice President. You know, all those things he said we’ve done he told the truth about, but what he didn’t say is a lot of them would not have happened if he hadn’t been the Vice President. And I think even the people who don’t like me and don’t agree with a lot of our policies cannot dispute that because of his role in reinventing Government, in telecommunications policy, in the environment, and in foreign policy, he is the most influential Vice President in the history of the United States of America.

Now, one of the things that wasn’t on his David Letterman’s list of the 10 best reasons to be Vice President that should have been is, working with Bill Clinton. I know so much more about so many things than he does, I have an interesting job, and when it goes wrong, he takes the heat. [Laughter] But nonetheless, it’s been an incredible partnership.

First thing I want to tell you is that this is one of those sort of get-off-the-dime elections. You know how people always say they want you to be brave and courageous and they want this, that, and the other thing, but they don’t, really?

[Laughter] You know? It’s fine if you do it, but not them. Or, one of Clinton’s laws of politics is, everybody is for change in general, but against it in particular.

I heard a story the other day that a friend of mine—actually, my senior Senator—told me about our neighbors in Louisiana, when Huey Long was preaching his “share the wealth” gospel in the Great Depression. And he was out in a country crossroads speaking to a bunch of farmers in their overalls. And he saw one he knew out there, and he was trying to make the point that half the people in the country were starving and out of work, people in Louisiana were in terrible shape. And he saw this old farmer, and he said, “Now, Brother Jones, if you had three Cadillacs, wouldn’t you give one of them up so that we could drive these country roads and collect all these kids up and take them to school during the week and to church on Sunday?” He said, “Of course I would.” He said, “Brother Jones, if you had \$1 million, wouldn’t you give up half of it so we could build a house for every family in this county and put a roof over their heads, give them three good meals a day?” He said, “You bet I would.” He said, “And Brother Jones, if you had three hogs—” He said, “Now, wait a minute, Governor, I’ve got three hogs.” [Laughter] So everybody’s for change in general.

Or my favorite story—I’ve got to quit this, but—[laughter]—my favorite story is the minister who gave very boring sermons, and finally he decided he would, if he never gave another one, finally give a passionate sermon that would move his congregation to give up all their inhibitions and stand up and shout and reaffirm their faith. And he worked and worked and worked, and he was doing a brilliant job. And he got to the climax of the sermon and he says, “I want everybody who wants to go to Heaven to stand up.” And the whole congregation leapt to their feet, except one old lady on the front row that hadn’t missed a Sunday in 40 years. And he was crestfallen. And he said, “Miss Jones, don’t you want to go to Heaven when you die?” And she leapt up, and she said, “I’m sorry, Preacher, I thought you were trying to get up a load to go right now.” [Laughter] So we’re all for this in general but not in particular.

Now, what is the point of all of this? What is the point of all this? We are living, I believe—when historians look back at this time, they will say that we are living now through a period

of change so profound that its only parallel really is what happened 100 years ago when we became an industrial and urbanized society, moving out of a rural agricultural society. We are now becoming not an industrial society but a society rooted in information and technology, even in manufacturing where the permutations of the uses of information and technology are staggering, unending, and rapidly increasing all the time.

We are moving from a bipolar world of nation-states roughly organized by the cold war into a post-cold-war era where there is remarkable global economic integration but very frightening forces of disintegration all across the globe, mostly organized forces of religious or racial or ethnic bigotry that can access technology to do terrible damage, whether it's a bomb blowing up a bus in Israel or a fanatic breaking open a vial of sarin gas in a subway station in Tokyo or a disturbed young man blowing up the Federal building in Oklahoma City with a bomb, the instructions for making which you can now find over the Internet if you're plugged into one of the fanatic programs.

On balance, this is a very exciting world we are moving into, and most of the people in this room, we're going to do great. And it's the most exciting time you can imagine. But it's also a time that is full of challenge.

Whenever people have to change, as I just tried to illustrate from my little stories, there is always a sort of inbred reluctance. We can't get to where we need to go, we can't make the 21st century America's century, we can't keep the American dream alive for all our people unless we're willing to embrace new ideas and new approaches. But we also have to be faithful to our basic values.

To go back to the remarks that Governor Romer made earlier tonight, that really is what this debate in Washington is all about today. How can we change and do what we need to do and be true to our basic values: freedom and responsibility, work and family and community, the obligation to find common ground and to work together, the obligation to do some things that may be unpopular in the present because they will be right for our kids 20 and 30 years from now? How can we help families to stick together? How can we help parents to raise their children in the right way? How can we give communities the capacity to solve their own problems and seize their own oppor-

tunities? How can we both help people who are trying to help themselves but hold people accountable who are doing things that are destructive of where we all want to go? That, it seems to me, is the great question of the day.

Now, you heard what the Vice President said. Our economic policies have brought a lot of good. We didn't do it alone, but we were a good partner with the private sector. And I want us to do more. Some of you here tonight are into communications. I want us to have a telecommunications reform in this country that will unleash enormous competitive impulses and create tens of thousands of new jobs. But I don't want to do it at the expense of ordinary people; I want us to have a fair and balanced approach to this. And let me explain why.

If I had told you on the day I was inaugurated—just consider this—now, if I told you on the day I was inaugurated, 30 months from now here's what will happen: We'll have 7½ million jobs, 2½ million new homeowners, 2 million new small businesses, the largest number of new entrepreneurs than at any time in our history; we will have the largest number of new self-made millionaires in American history—hallelujah—the stock market will be at 4,700; but the wage of the guy in the middle in America will have dropped one percent, you would think, “Nah, no way, can't have happened.” But that's exactly what's happened.

In other words, in the midst of what by any standard is a very strong economic recovery, the 25 percent increase in exports and all the other things the Vice President said and with the jobs being created, on balance, paying way above average wages, the median wage, the wage of the person in the middle, is still slipping.

Why is that? Because all these forces toward global integration work to press disintegration on families and communities who aren't prepared to compete and win in that world. That means if our value is to keep the American dream alive for everybody who's willing to work hard, we have to ask ourselves, now what do we have to do, not only to keep the economic recovery going but to spread its benefits to all those people that are out there doing the right thing and still can't keep up?

If I had told you 30 months ago that the crime rate would be down in this country, the murder rate would be down, the welfare rolls would be down, the food stamp rolls would be

down—even some of our deeper social issues that don't go directly to Government actions—the divorce rate is down, the number of abortions in America is down, we seem to be coming back to a more traditional way of coming to grips with our problems, you would say, "That's very good." And a lot of our policies did contribute to some of that. We're collecting more child support as well. We are collecting more delinquencies on student loans. We are holding people more accountable for their actions. That's all great. How could this happen and at the same time we are facing, as the mayor and I talked about tonight, an explosion in crime among juveniles between the ages of 12 and 17? Drug use among people between the ages of 18 and 34 is down in America, but casual drug use among people between the ages of 12 and 17 is up. There are a lot of reasons for this, folks. And I may be stepping on somebody's toes tonight, but a lot of these kids are out there raising themselves. A lot of the schools are turning them out too early. And a lot of them see people their own age being manipulated in horrible ways. And as I said, this may not be popular. I don't have any comment on whether those Calvin Klein ads were legal or illegal, but those kids were my daughter's age that were in those ads, and they were outrageous. It was wrong.

And it is wrong to manipulate. It is wrong to manipulate these children, to use them for commercial benefit. It's hard enough to grow up in this world as it is without confusing people further. It's hard enough to give kids a chance to grow and to learn and to adjust to how they ought to relate to other people without their being either ignored or manipulated.

So I say to you, we ought to be happy about these good things that are happening. I am ecstatic. But we cannot lose a whole generation of our children. And if they don't happen to be in our families, and they happen to be poor and they happen to live a long way from us, we still better be concerned about them.

Yesterday when I was with Governor Romer's and my friend Lawton Chiles, the Governor of Florida, who used to be the chairman of the Senate Budget Committee and was always trying to get us to do something about the deficit, he said an interesting thing. He said America has to decide whether we are a community or a crowd. He said a crowd is just a bunch of people that just do the best they can and the

strongest win and the weakest lose. And most folks just get pushed around. A community recognizes that we do better if we go up together and that we have obligations to one another and that when we change, as we are now, we have to ask ourselves all over again, what are those obligations going to be, and how will they be defined in this new age?

Now, that's what this budget debate is all about. Make no mistake about it, this is not about money; it's about values. The money is almost incidental to the decisions that are being made to affect people's lives.

But I ask you to consider this: The issue is not whether we should balance the budget. The Vice President told you the truth. We have effected a great change in the Democratic Party. People used to say, "Well, the Democrats are the party of Government and big spending." It was always overstated. The truth is that in every year of the Reagan and Bush years except one, in every year but one, the Congress spent less money than the President asked them to. A lot of the Democrats won't believe that, but it's the truth. I went back and checked myself. *[Laughter]*

We said to the Democratic Party in Congress, we said, we shouldn't be running a permanent deficit. We never had a permanent deficit in this country until 1981. Oh, yes, we ran a little deficit in the 1970's because we had all that stagflation, and it was a bad economy. But we never committed ourselves to the proposition that we ought to just spend more than we take in forever and a day until 1981. And in 12 years, we quadrupled the debt of this country. The budget of this country would be balanced today but for the interest we have to pay on the debt run up in the 12 years before I moved to Washington as your President. Now, that's the truth.

So, now we've got both parties saying, "Let's balance the budget. Hallelujah, it's the right thing to do." But how we do it in a period of great change will make all the difference. So I say to you, let's look at these things. What are our obligations to the next generation to build the American dream? What are our obligations to our parents who built this country, defeated the Depression, won World War II, set up the cold war, prevailed there, gave us the greatest period of prosperity the world had ever known? What are our obligations across the lines of generations and incomes? And how are we

going to change to build the kind of economy that will permit everybody to benefit from the explosion of opportunity that is the information age?

The first thing we have to recognize is, we'll never get everybody's income up until we educate everyone. The plain, hard fact is that in the world we are moving toward, people in rich countries with low levels of education are going to be pounded. We know that. Therefore, we ought to help more kids get started right. Therefore, we ought to help our schools have smaller classes and higher standards and greater accountability and more computers and whatever else they need. Therefore, we ought to help people move from school to work. If they're not going to a 4-year college, at least give them the kind of training they need to get a good job with growing prospects. And therefore, we certainly ought to help our young people do things like national service or get Pell grants or get more affordable college loans with better repayment terms so they can go on to college and make the best of their own lives. This is huge deal.

So I say to you, we do not have to destroy the education budget of this country to balance the budget. Therefore, we shouldn't do it. Now, the congressional plan reflects a different value judgment. Their value judgment is, "We said we'd do it in 7 years, and we didn't know how. But we're going to do it in 7 years, not 8, 9, or 10, even though if we took a little longer, we could protect education. And we said we were going to give a \$250 billion tax cut, and we're going to do it if we have to bust a gut doing it, even though half the money will go to people who are doing real well now who haven't asked for it and most of them don't want it, we're going to do it anyway. And if it means we have to cut education, if we have to kick kids out of Head Start, or we raise the cost of college loans or do other things that are bad for America, well, it's just too bad. We've got to have 7 years and \$250 billion."

I say we ought to do what's right for the children of this country. We owe it to them. And we know, we know, that America will not be the place that we grew up in if we have another 30 years where half the people work harder every year for lower wages. Now, we know that. You don't have to be brilliant; we know that. So we ought to do it.

There are those who say that the free enterprise system is being hobbled by all these terrible rules for clean air and clean water. In the Congress this year in one House, they voted to say we couldn't enforce the Clean Air Act. It wouldn't be so good for Denver. They voted to say that we couldn't enforce the rules to keep cryptosporidium out of municipal water supplies. That's what killed all those people in Milwaukee. It wouldn't be so hot if it got in your water supply.

They voted to say for a while, until we defeated them, that we couldn't even implement the regulations for safe meat to stop more *E. coli* outbreaks like those that killed those kids in those fast food places a couple of years ago. We're still inspecting meat the way dogs do. [Laughter] That's the truth. We smell it and look at it. [Laughter] Your Government has never modernized the technology that's there available. Now we're going to do it. Our administration has worked for 2 years to do it. Mike Espy, when he was Secretary of Agriculture, started it. And they tried to delay it, because it was going to add the teeniest—I mean the teeniest—amount to the cost of a hamburger. If it keeps a kid alive, it's worth it.

Some of them have suggested we ought to close a couple of hundred national parks. You know, Hillary and Chelsea and I went to Grand Tetons and Yellowstone this summer, and we spent our time in the national parks. We got to feed the wolves that we're trying to reintroduce into Yellowstone. We got to see things that were priceless.

But you know what was unique about it? Anybody in America in a car could get in for \$10. Anybody in America in a car could get in for \$10. We've got some folks wanting to build a gold mine 3 miles from Yellowstone. And you know, when you mine gold or any other mineral, you have a lot of waste product, and it's acidic, and if it gets into the water, it will ruin the water quality. And up there where they want to mine it, they only have about 2 months of frost-free days a year, so you've got a lot of variation in the temperature. They want to build sort of a hard plastic bag, 70 football fields long and 6 or 7 or 8 stories high, and put it between 2 mountains and say, "Well, we're just sure nothing will happen to Yellowstone in the next 20 or 30 or 40 years."

This is the sort of mentality—this is not about money. Eighty percent of that gold will go to

jewelry, not to some great scientific purpose. What's Yellowstone worth? What's our natural heritage worth? What's clean air and clean water worth?

Now, Al Gore—we have worked very hard to take some of the crazy regulations out of the EPA. Next year, the average person complying with the EPA regulations will spend 25 percent less time than they used to. If a small business person calls the EPA and asks for help now, they cannot be fined—listen to this—they cannot be fined for 6 months because they're trying to do the right thing.

We have tried to change the burdensome things. But I'm telling you, there is no value to put on the preservation of our natural heritage, and it is not necessary to balance the budget to destroy it. It will only undermine the future of America if we do that, and we must not do it.

You heard what the Vice President said about the crime bill. Some people say that we should cut spending on the crime bill—which we paid for by eliminating 100,000 Federal employees—we ought to cut spending on the crime bill, not require 100,000 new police officers, and send a block grant to local governments and hope it gets spent right.

I never thought there was a constituency for raising the crime rate until this happened. [Laughter] The one thing any law enforcement officer in America will tell you is if you put more police into community policing and they walk the streets or they drive around the same blocks all the time and they know their neighbors, you can actually lower the crime rate.

This is a big deal. If you told anybody 5 years ago we could lower the crime rate, most Americans would say, "Nah, not a chance," you know, "We're just going in the wrong direction, people don't have enough respect for each other. There's too much violence, too much guns, too much this, too much that." Well, it's not true.

We passed the Brady bill, and tens of thousands of people now, tens of thousands of people with criminal histories or dangerous mental health histories have not gotten guns who would have gotten it otherwise. It has worked. And those police officers, they're working. We're lowering the crime rate. You cannot convince me that we have to raise the crime rate to balance the budget. It is not true. That is a value judgment. That is a value—you're laughing, but you

know, you've got to be like Abe Lincoln, you're laughing because you're too old to cry. [Laughter] This is true.

And I could give you so many other examples. Ronald Reagan said the best antipoverty program put in in the last 30 years was the program the Vice President talked about, the earned-income tax credit. It's a family tax credit. And I increased it dramatically, or at least I asked the Congress to and they did, because I had a simple idea. I said, "Look, everybody wants to reform welfare, but if we're going to reform welfare, we ought to make work pay."

And most people who are parents in this country today have to work, so we ought to want people to succeed as parents and workers. Therefore, we should use the tax system to lift people out of poverty if they're working 40 hours a week and they've got kids in their home. And by the way, it's had an ancillary economic benefit because, as the Vice President said, those folks spend all the money they make, and it's helped to jump the economy; it's helped to support our economy. But it's been—basically, it wasn't a money deal, it wasn't all that much money. It was about family and work and fairness and responsibility. And it worked.

So there are people now in the Congress who say that the best way to pay for our tax cut is to cut back on the earned-income tax credit and thereby raise the taxes of the working poor. Now, I didn't think there was any constituency in America for making welfare more attractive than work again. But that would be the necessary impact of this. We don't have to do it to balance the budget, and we shouldn't. It's not about money; it's about our values.

The last thing I want to say is, there's a lot of talk about Medicare and Medicaid. I understand there was some talk in the local paper about it today. And some people say, "Now, the acid test about whether you really want to balance the budget is just how much you want to cut Medicare and Medicaid. That shows whether you're really macho on balancing the budget."

Well, I want to say this: When I became President, the Medicare Trust Fund was in trouble. Now, you hear the leaders of the Congress telling you how much trouble it's in now. It's still in trouble, but it's in 3 years less trouble than it was when I became President when they denied it and wouldn't help us. And we fixed

it because we knew something had to be done about this. And something does.

Why? Because medical costs are going up faster than the rate of inflation, and we can't keep going. But I want you to understand, we can fix the Medicare Trust Fund and we can slow the rate of medical inflation without having huge increases on elderly people on Medicare—and keep in mind, three out of four of them live on less than \$24,000 a year—without foreclosing 300,000 opportunities for people to be in nursing homes and over a million opportunities for people to have home health care under the Medicaid program. We can do that.

I have proposed substantial reductions in Medicare and Medicaid that don't do that, that don't run the risk of hurting your city hospitals here or closing these rural hospitals in the Plains States. We can do this if we recognize our fundamental obligation, if we say, how are we going to balance the budget in a way that promotes our values?

So I want to ask you all to do what you can to help, with all the people who represent you in Congress, without regard to their party. Tell them you want them to balance the budget. Tell them you expect them to balance the budget. We're doing it to lift this terrible burden of debt off our children and to free up money to be invested in the private economy to grow more jobs. But we cannot do it in a way that undermines the very fabric of what it means to be an American. That is the issue in the budget debate.

I just want to make two other points. One is, we've got to keep trying to find common ground. There's too much in our politics today driving people to the extremes, trying to use every issue as a wedge issue. This welfare issue—it's very important to reform welfare. You know why? Because it isn't good for the children and their parents to be trapped on it and because it undermines our country when everybody can't live up to the fullest of their own abilities. But it is not busting the bank. It's only costing you about 2 or 3 percent of all the money that the Government spends.

We need to do it because of the values involved. And therefore, it is important that we do it in a way that brings us together, not drives us apart. We shouldn't punish little babies for the mistakes of their parents. We shouldn't do anything that doesn't support the two objectives we have: We want these people to be good

parents, and we want these people to be successful in the workplace. That should be our objective. And everything about welfare reform should be seen through that prism. I believe in being tough, holding people accountable, requiring them to work if they can, but not at the expense of raising their children successfully in the right way.

Let me give you another example. This affirmative action issue, there are a lot of people who say this ought to be a big issue in the Presidential campaign because they believe that they can convince white voters who've got stagnant wages that the real reason is somebody did something for minorities or for women under affirmative action.

Well, let me tell you, I conducted a huge review of all the affirmative action programs of the United States Government. And there are some problems with some. We've already abolished one. Some more may be abolished. Several more will have to be amended. But we are still not a country where people have equal opportunities without regard to their gender or their race. And until we are, it is okay to take account of that in trying to make sure that everybody has a fair chance.

I'm against quotas. I'm against reverse discrimination. We have brought reverse discrimination suits in our administration. But I say we should not end affirmative action until we have gotten the job done, and we should not use this issue to divide the American people when we should be united over it.

I feel the same way about immigration. There are people who want to make a big political issue out of that to divide us. We have had unprecedented levels of immigration and unprecedented problems with illegal immigration in the last 10 years. I have—instead of making a political issue out of it, I appointed Barbara Jordan, the distinguished former Congresswoman from Texas, to look at the issue and say what is right for America. And we have done far more than was done in the previous years to try to limit illegal immigration, and she has recommended and I have supported a reduction in the annual quota for immigration because we went way high after the cold war to try to help people adjust to the end of the cold war. And if we're going to lift wages, if we're going to expect people on welfare to go to work in those kinds of jobs that will be available, we have to make sure that we have a

decent tight labor market. And so I'm in favor of that.

But let's not forget, except for the Native Americans in this audience tonight, we all came from somewhere else. We are a nation of immigrants, and we should not use immigration to divide us. Our diversity is our strength in America, not our weakness.

And the last thing I want to say is this: I have no earthly idea what is popular or not or what will be on election day, because one of the things you have to reconcile yourself to in a period of great change is unpredictability. And we have to do things in Washington that look terribly unpopular in the moment because we think they're right for America 10 or 20 or 30 years from now.

I'll give you a mundane example. When we decided to invest the Vice President's prestige and some of the most talented staff people in this reinventing Government thing, all the political advice I got was, "This is nuts. No President has ever made a single vote on managing the Government." All I know is that they're having a terrible disaster now in the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico. And our Emergency Management Agency used to be a disaster, but now they're down there helping people. And that was worth doing. And that's one example of what we've done.

You heard the Vice President—they told me that I had absolutely slipped my lid when I made the decision to do what we did in Haiti. Everybody said, "This is crazy. Nobody is for it. Nobody understands it." But I knew that those military dictators who were murdering people down there had promised us—they had given us their word on our soil that they would get out and let the elected President of Haiti return, and that if we didn't enforce their word to us, then the United States would not be able to be a force for peace and freedom and democracy in our own hemisphere. And nobody would respect us if we let them get away with lying to us. And what we did was right and decent, and it did not cost the life of a single American. It was the right thing to do.

I can say this in Colorado; I know what I'm talking about here. All the political advice I had was not to do the Brady bill. And once we did the Brady bill, "For goodness sake, don't ban assault weapons, because the NRA will convince all the country people with a gun that you're coming after their rifle." And that hap-

pened, folks. If you get them in a quiet room, the leaders of the Republican House will tell you they probably have a majority today because we banned assault weapons. And I knew it was bad politics. You know why? If you took a poll in Colorado, two-thirds of the people would have agreed with the Democrats to banning the assault weapons. But the people who didn't were all going to vote against them. The people that agreed with them found some other reason to vote against them.

You want to know why people never take on organized interest groups? That's why. And if you want people in public life to do it, you need to stick with them when they do. But do you know why we did it? You know why we did it? You know why we did it? Because I went to city after city after city—I sat in Philadelphia, I sat in Chicago—I'll never forget this in my life—and I talked to all these people who were running emergency rooms in Chicago telling me that the mortality rate of children with gunshot wounds was 3 times what it was 15 years ago because they have 3 times as many bullets in them when they're brought into the hospital. And I say, if it gets the Uzis out of the high schools and off the streets and give some more kids a chance, it's worth the risk to do it. But we ought to do it.

We've got another broadside today in Washington over this fight we're in to try to discourage teenage smoking. And all the experts said this is politically nuts because, while most people agree with you, those that don't will take you out, and those that do will find some other reason to oppose you. But you know what? We studied this problem for 14 months, and there were two inescapable conclusions. All previous voluntary agreements had failed. The tobacco companies knew that the product was addictive, was dangerous, and they were directing their efforts at children. And the second, and most important thing, was 3,000 kids a day start smoking and a thousand of them are going to die sooner because of it.

And if it saves a thousand kids a day, in the end who cares what the consequences are? In the 21st century that could make a huge difference to the children of America and to the kind of country we have and the kind of people we have and what we're attuned to.

Now, these are the things I want you to think about. And these are the things I want you to talk about. This election is about more than

Bill Clinton and Al Gore. It's about more than the Democrats and the Republicans. This is an election about what kind of people we are and what we're going to do.

But I want you to be fundamentally optimistic. You just remember, this is a very great country. We are the oldest democracy in the world because most of the time when the chips are down, we do the right thing. Nearly 50 years ago, when I was born in Arkansas, the per capita income of my State was barely half the national average. I was raised by my grandparents until I was 4. My grandfather had a sixth-grade education. Because of America, I became President, not because of my goodness or my ability or because I worked hard. There are people like me all over this world because this country stood for something and had the right values and gave people like me a chance.

And I am telling you, if we do the right thing now, the best days of this country are ahead of us, the best is yet to come. But it depends upon you and people like you.

So thank you for your contribution. But now go do your duty as citizens. The whole future of this country is riding on it.

God bless you. Thank you.

Note: The President spoke at 9:02 p.m. at the Marriott Center. In his remarks, he referred to Sunny Brownstein, executive committee member, Colorado Presidential Gala; Mayor Wellington E. Webb of Denver, CO, and his wife, Wilma; Governor Roy Romer of Colorado and his wife, Bea; and Terence McAuliffe, national finance chair, and Laura Hartigan, national finance director, Clinton/Gore '96.

Remarks at the Exploratorium in San Francisco, California *September 21, 1995*

Thank you very much. First of all, I'd like to thank Mr. Delacote and all the people who hosted us here. To Mayor Jordan and your outstanding California commissioner of education, Delaine Eastin, and to all of the others who are gathered here today, thank you very much for being here with us. I want to say to all the students here that the Vice President and I are delighted to see you. Normally, we would not want to be responsible for taking you out of class, but today we think maybe we have a good reason. And we hope we have a chance to shake hands with a lot of you as soon as this brief ceremony is over. I want to say to all of the executives of the information companies that we just met with how very grateful I am to you, and I'll say a few words about them in a moment.

I came here to San Francisco today to issue a challenge to America to see to it that every classroom in our country, every classroom in our country, is connected to the information superhighway. To demonstrate that this is possible, we are all here today to announce a giant step toward that future.

By the end of this school year, every school in California, 12,000 of them, will have access

to the Internet and its vast world of knowledge. By the end of this school year, fully 20 percent of California's classrooms, 2,500 kindergartens, elementary, middle, and high schools, from one end of this State to the other, will be connected for computers. If that can be done in California, we can do it in the rest of America.

But the key is to have the kind of partnership that we are celebrating here. The job of connecting California schools will be undertaken by a wide alliance of private sector companies, among them, Sun Microsystems, Apple, Xerox Park, Oracle, 3Com, Silicon Graphics, Applied Materials, TCI, Cisco Systems, and others. Our administration has brought these companies together, we have set goals, but they are doing the rest. Just as the connecting of our classrooms is a model for the 21st century, so is the way we are doing it here today, with Government as a catalyst, not a blank check.

So today, I challenge business and industry and local government throughout our country to make a commitment of time and resources so that by the year 2000, every classroom in America will be connected.

Tens of millions of parents all across our Nation have watched their children play every kind